

Appl. No. 10/716,392
Submission Dated June 2, 2005

Remarks

The applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended in the interview of October 19, 2005 and for his consideration of the present application.

In the telephone interview, the undersigned explained how the prior art, and in particular the cited Patterson et al. reference, could not anticipate the claims. The undersigned also explained the advantages of the current invention. Composites typically require less maintenance and provide a lower risk of exposure to harmful chemicals than pressure-treated lumber. The use of pressure-treated wood or other lumber products is, however, still desirable in portions of a deck, since they typically provide more strength than comparably priced composites. If, for example, a deck were made using composites where strength was not needed and pressure-treated wood where strength was needed, the deck would have a non-uniform appearance, would still require a high-level of maintenance, and would still expose deck users to leaching chemicals. Thus, the present invention solves these problems by providing the strength of a natural wood product with the advantages of a composite.

During the discussion, the Examiner raised the issue of obviousness and suggested adding more limitations to the claims.

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Accordingly, the applicants submit the foregoing claims for discussion. The Examiner is kindly requested to phone the undersigned to discuss these claims.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



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